

# Light:

*A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.*

"WHATEVER DOTH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT."—Paul.

"LIGHT, MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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## NOTES BY THE WAY.

Contributed by "M.A. (Oxon.)"

A friend sends me a small pamphlet giving a biographical account of Edison, the great electrician. It is translated from "La Vie Populaire," and the curious will find a copy on the table at "LIGHT" office. I have always been interested about Edison's early life. For I believe that such a genius is a very interesting study to the Spiritualist. None of us lives to or by himself. None of us really knows himself; probably he has only a working acquaintance with a superficial part of that fully rounded individuality, a portion only of which is consciously correlated with the surroundings of this world. None of us knows how far his thoughts and acts are his own, unaided and undirected by those unseen beings whose presence some of us can sense, and to whom we are all more or less indebted. Where what I call *myself* ends, and someone else steps in to guide and direct, is a problem as yet unsolved by me. I cannot tell: only I know of a surety that such aid is given me, such guidance comes from spirit-friends, and I am content to defer the exact solution of the problem to a time when I shall be more fit to grasp and master it. If this be so with us of ordinary clay, what shall we say of the rarer porcelain that the will of the Great Potter creates for an admiring generation at infrequent intervals? What of the geniuses that lift human knowledge on to a higher level by their intuitions: that push on the progress of the race by their efforts: that stand towering over their fellows and carry in their inspired countenance, in the eye, "the window of the soul," a radiance that is not of earth? Inspired they are in a sense as full as were the prophets and seers of old: and their insight and inspiration comes from the same prolific source—the world of spirit that surrounds us, and its denizens, who, often unknown to us, guide and direct our destinies. It may well be that over the man-child born to such distinction as Edison has achieved appointed guardians watch and pour into the receptive soul the knowledge that he is to give to the world. Such, at least, is my belief: it gives me the only clue I can get to the doings of precocious genius in those minds of tender age that are taught we know not how, except that their knowledge was not gained through ordinary channels of instruction. I have known children who seem to have brought with them into this world the keys to mysteries that most men plod on to advanced age, solving wearily. One is a born musician, "taught of God," for man had nothing to do with teaching him. Another "lisps in numbers, for the numbers come," a poet born, not made. Another sees and reproduces Nature's subtle beauties that escape the conventional eye, while yet his untrained fingers should be

learning to draw a line. Some are scientific in the cradle: others have solved abstruse problems of exact science in mathematics before they can talk clearly. To others, as to Edison, the infinite combinations, which lead to discoveries in science and their application to the arts, are an open book. In all we trace the results of causes hidden in the past, a book now closed to our inspection. When we are able to read that book what secrets will be revealed, what problems solved in the lives of the geniuses of earth!

Edison is now forty-four, and he has crammed into that comparatively short space of existence more beneficent work than is produced in most long lives, for he began early, and has been a most indefatigable and tireless toiler with brain and hand. His father was a poor man who scraped together a precarious living by the most various trades. At eleven we find his son selling newspapers on the Grand Trunk Railroad, and spending all his spare time in reading, "sometimes Hume's 'England,' sometimes the 'Encyclopædia' or Fresenius's 'Quantitative Analysis.'" These books stirred his inventive faculty; imagination, the great creative faculty in man, found its place, and the boy set himself to provide the sinews of war, the wherewithal to give objectivity to the children of his brain. He started a newspaper and sold it up and down the line on which he travelled. Train information, the price of potatoes, moral reflections on the exposure of a swindler, nascent criticism jostle each other in the columns. It is a "live" paper. "There is no one who knows how to drive and care for the engine entrusted to his hands as Mr. E. L. Northrop. *We can express a competent opinion on that subject, as we have been travelling for two years.*" The competent critic was not yet twelve years old! So he progresses until he is almost rich, able to study, and he takes up—shcemaking. Electricity, however, is his mistress, and he enters the telegraphic department, failing in regularity of attendance because of the thoughts that fill his mind. Regularity is essential, and his manager tries to break him in by requiring him to telegraph to him every half hour the word *six*. *Six* duly arrives, but none the less Edison is not at his post. He has invented a machine that transmitted the telegram in his place.

I cannot follow the fortunes which from this time forward have made of the name of Edison a familiar household word. Six hundred and ten discoveries stand to his credit, and each one has opened out into the future a new vista of possibility. He has an army of men—more than 3,000—in his works, and they all worship "The Sage" as they have called him. He devotes most of his appliances to experimental investigation, and is careless of the amount spent on his researches, for he has prospered, and any amount is within his reach. All is under his own direction: he will curl up on a heap of "waste" for a hurried nap, devour a hunk of bread and bacon, and stay in his workshop till the invention takes form and shape in his seething brain. The most modest and retiring of men, and the most simple, with a horror of conventional festivities



and functions, he finds his pleasure in his work and in a ride on an electric tricycle of his own invention. His appearance is that of a tall, broad-shouldered man with a student's stoop, a pale beardless face, long fair hair, grey eyes, whose wandering gaze takes in everything, and dislikes to be fixed by his interlocutor, a far away look of preoccupation—sure sign of mediumistic gifts, for your medium shuns the magnetic gaze of any but a very friendly eye, and looks far into the future to the disregard of the present—that is Edison, inventor, electrician, genius, and benefactor of mankind.

I am preparing an exhaustive account of such records of the "Double" as have been published in the various periodicals up to the present date. I shall be obliged to any readers who will direct my attention to cases published in foreign magazines and journals; if a translation can be sent it will add to the obligation: if not, an exact reference will be the next best thing. It is a very interesting subject of research and will lead, I hope, to some discussion on the exact nature of the phenomenon. A well-known correspondent, "V.," sends me the following letter on the subject I hasten to place it on record as material for criticism.

#### THE DOUBLE.

SIR,—In Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace's most interesting and instructive paper, entitled "What are Phantasms, and Why do they Appear?"\* the following passage occurs:—

"The clue to a true explanation of these very puzzling 'doubles,' as of all the other varied phenomena of phantasms and hauntings, is, I believe, afforded by the following passage by one of the most thoughtful and experienced of modern Spiritualists, Dr. Eugene Crowell:—

"I have frequently consulted my spirit friends upon this question, and have invariably been told by them that a spirit while in mortal form cannot for an instant leave it; were it to do so, death would at once ensue; and that the appearance of oneself at another place from that in which the body at the moment is, is simply a personation by another spirit, who thus often accomplishes a purpose desired by his mortal friend, or some other useful purpose is accomplished by the personation. I am informed, and believe, that in cases of trance, where the subjects have supposed that their spirits have left their bodies and visited the spheres, their minds have been psychologically impressed with views representing spiritual scenes, objects, and sounds, and many times these impressions are so apparently real and truthful that the reality itself barely exceeds these representations of it, but these are all subjective impressions, not actual experiences."†

Another argument against the "double" being the spiritual body occurs to me to be this: We are told by our spirit guides—at least, I can speak for myself—that the spirit body, which is during our mortal life part of and closely connected with our physical body, is not subjected to the infirmities of the latter, does not become aged or decrepid, but is ever youthful and vigorous; thus in the spirit body there would be no marks of age, no wrinkles, grey hair, or other defects, while the "double" of a person which is sometimes seen at a distance from him is an exact duplicate of his mortal body at the time—thus the "double" of an old man of seventy would appear as an old man, with all the marks of old age, even to dim eyes, white hair, or false teeth, and therefore could not be the spiritual body of that old man, even if it were possible for the mortal body to continue to exist, when the spiritual body was separated from it, which, I am told, only occurs at death.

"V."

Probably we shall not be able to accept Dr. Crowell's conclusion that "a spirit while in the mortal form cannot for a moment leave it; were it so death would at once ensue." Certainly my own experience does not bear out that statement. It is, I admit, very difficult to verify sensations when one is or has lately been in an abnormal state. But, if I can at all trust my powers of observation and memory, I have several times been disengaged from the physical body and have had a distinct recollection of what then occurred. I have also at times been separate from the body without any memory of what took place. I have been informed as to these matters subsequently, but I have no recollection or power of verifying statements. I cannot

think that the clear memory which I have of some cases is a hallucination: though obviously I cannot say that it is not an impression made on my waking memory by spirit-friends for some purpose. But for what purpose I wonder. Why should I be told and made to believe that my spirit-self was separated from its earthly envelope if that was not the case and the occurrences of which my memory was clear were referable to other causes? The question is exactly parallel to that which I have so often asked without eliciting any adequate reply: Why should those who communicate, being (as is alleged by some) elemental spirits or some other order of intelligence, always with one accord describe themselves as the departed spirits of humanity? What is the motive? In the case of the double it is even less thinkable than in the case last referred to: but in each, I ask once more, Why? *Cui bono*? Are we so mistaken? And then as to death ensuing if the soul once quitted the body—it is the old bogie cry. I remember we used to be gravely told that if any one looked at or touched the medium while the materialised form was in evidence, it would mean death to the medium. We could not say nay to such a statement, and for a long time no experiment of the kind was attempted. I wish it never had been made, for, when made, it proved nothing except that the materialised form when grasped was found to be the body of the medium and that the said medium *did not die*. Doubtless there was a severe shock to the nervous system, but whether that was greater than would be likely to supervene in the case of the detection of what passed for imposture by a young lady who was discovered in a very equivocal position and condition as to her clothing I do not feel able to say. However, she did not die—they did not, any of them, die. And I suspect this statement as to the severance of the soul from the body causing death amounts to much the same thing. So far as my knowledge goes there is a magnetic link, in appearance like a cord of light, uniting the sleeping or entranced body to the double, and this connecting link is never severed and may be prolonged apparently to an indefinite distance in space. It may be that its complete severance would mean death. I have been told so, and I have seen that the same statement has been made to others. It *may* be. I do not know that it *is*. I have never felt any temptation to take that novel and painless way of avoiding further annoyance from the miseries of this wicked world. So I do not know; a condition of mind which, I suspect, I share with everybody else. The subject, however, is full of interest.

"The Review of Reviews" has an interesting summary of an article in the "Revue des Deux Mondes," by M. Alfred Foville, on "The Power of Ideas over Matter," a hypnotic study. Does mind move matter, or does matter move mind? The writer looks to hypnotism for some results from which to draw philosophical conclusions on this vexed question. The two sides to it are illustrated by the two great schools of Paris and Nancy. According to Paris, matter is the reality, and mind its pale reflection. According to Nancy, mind is the reality, and by it matter is modified. M. Foville demurs to this sharp division: it is too sharply antithetical. For him there is "one sole and unique reality, an immense ocean, in which the facts that are called physical and the facts that are called psychical are all waves, contributing each its part to the eternal storm." Between joy and tears who shall define the transition from mind to matter? Moreover, in the world of ideas we find the same survival of the fittest which evolutionists have found in the world of matter. "The force of ideas is a real force possessed by us as thinking human beings, while we are, perhaps, at the same time ourselves only the expression of the ideas of eternal nature. M. Foville gives many instances of the manner in which, *e.g.*, by hypnotic suggestion, an idea is translated into a material fact. The hypnotiser suggests that a blister of the shape of an S is to

\* "Arena," February, 1891.

† "Primitive Christianity and Modern Spiritualism," Vol. II. p. 109.



be applied: an ordinary piece of paper is cut and applied. The blister rises in the suggested shape. *There is an idea operating and translated into an objective fact.* Conversely the patient is told that a soothing lotion will now be applied to the painful blister. Instead real blistering fluid is applied, but the *symptoms are those of the soothing lotion and not of the blister.* Proceeding with this argument, M. Foville arrives at the conclusion of Descartes that to "conceive clearly is to attain." "The image, the idea, the sensation of the best in the realisation of the best. Mental and physical form but one concrete reality. There is no movement of the body which has not a mental counterpart. There is no mental fact which has not an organic efficacy." So then we may come back to old ground. Matter is the expression of the Divine Creative Will:—in the words of my Spirit-teacher, "the phenomenal manifestation of the Supreme." The vista opened out is tremendous.

I have received copies of the Chicago "Daily Inter-Ocean" (June 1st) and "The Providence, Rhode Island Evening Bulletin," of same date, announcing the death of Prentice Mulford, Editor of the "White Cross Library," so often noticed in these columns. He was found dead at the bottom of his canoe, the "White Cross," in which he had started for a long cruise about New York Bay, intending to work his way along Long Island Sound to his native place, Sag Harbour, which he expected to reach early in July. He was searching for a suitable site on which to establish his projected "Church of Silent Demand," particulars of which he had given in his "White Cross" publications. He seems to have thought Sag Harbour the most fitting; but it is more than doubtful whether this precarious project can now be carried out. Mr. Mulford was a valued friend of Mr. and Mrs. William Tebb, who had several interviews with him during their recent tour. He was a single-minded and simple man with considerable insight into the working of hidden spiritual forces. His letters to me always impressed me with a sense of the directness of his convictions and self-sacrifice giving effect to them. One account of the finding of his body I place on record here:—

For several days the canoe, which was covered by a white canvas awning, had been noticed drifting about aimlessly, and on Saturday afternoon a boatman, impelled by curiosity, rowed toward it and found it, to all appearances, deserted. The canoe had its name, "White Cross," painted on the bow. On closer examination the body of a man, lying at full length on the bottom of the little craft, was discovered, life evidently having been extinct for several days. In the boat were a complete outfit for camping, a small kerosene stove, cooking utensils, a saw, and a supply of provisions. In a box in the bow of the boat were found a banjo, writing materials, an empty cigar-case, and some pages of brown paper covered with writing. Last June Mulford returned from California and assumed the editorship of the "White Cross Library," a monthly magazine. Last Monday he announced that he was about to spend a month or two in his canoe, cruising about New York Bay and gradually working his way along Long Island Sound to Sag Harbour, his birth-place, which he expected to reach by July 1st, when Mr. Needham was to join him. This was the last that the Needhams heard of him until they read of his being found in a canoe drifting in Sheephead Bay. The writing pad with Needham's address printed on it, together with other articles found in the canoe, convinced them that it was the body of Prentice Mulford. He for seven years, while West, conducted the "Overland Monthly."

[I regret that I cannot give any satisfactory account of my health. Great prostration and weakness, with various complications, prevent any return of health. Convalescence must be very slow, even if relapse is avoided.]

A MAN'S fortunes are the fruit of his character. A man's friends are his magnetisms.—EMERSON ("Conduct of Life: Fate.")

EACH creature puts forth from itself its own condition and sphere, as the slug sweats out its slimy house on the pear-leaf, and the woolly aphides on the apple perspire their own bed, and the fish its shell.—EMERSON. ("Conduct of Life: Fate.")

## LETTERS ON THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

BY A READER OF "LIGHT."

No. III.

DEAR —, You say that what I am writing is just what you need. Thus encouraged I find heart to continue.

I told you I was laid hold of at the juncture spoken of in my last. It was well and kindly meant, but unfortunate. It sowed years of misery. I was at school. A confirmation was about to be held and I was one of the candidates. What did it all mean, I wondered. I was restless, uncomfortable, would rather have gone on without it; but an awful "needs must" impelled me forward.

After church one Sunday evening our musical governess—a very religious woman—called me into her room and talked to me after this fashion: "You are going to be confirmed, and I want you to understand what it means. It means giving up the world to serve God. You are full of life and you enjoy it; but you are a lost soul that needs saving, and you can only be saved by giving up everything you like for the sake of God. He will accept of nothing less. Now, as soon as you leave school you will be called upon to go out into the world, to go to balls and parties and theatres; you must give them all up—they represent the world. God does not love dancing. It is foolish and frivolous, and as for your music, you must be careful of what you sing, and you must not be fond of dress and . . ."

By this time I felt like a prisoner at the bar. The outlook on life was from a prisoner's point of view—a gloom and a despair. And I was to love this God Who had so richly endowed my nature only to torture me by its repression! "It is very hard," I remember saying. "Yes; of course it is hard, but it must be done," was the reply. "You will promise to renounce the pomps and vanities of the world and you must, if you would be saved."

She had me in the firm grip of the "letter which killeth." Nowhere could I find the "spirit which giveth life." Observe the seeming similarity between her teaching and what I said to you about reckoning with yourself to give up Self. Outwardly, who shall gainsay the correctness of her teaching that we must lose our lives if we would find them? But it is just this seeming similarity that is so deceitful and misleading. The Spirit of Evil is not slow to wrest it to his own purpose. It is quite true that we must forsake all if we would find God and overcome Self; but the Self here is the Self that recognises God as the Spirit of Love, not as the despotic tyrant, and is ready to yield up the will in acquiescence to His Will. This is the secret, the key to the whole Divine Mystery: when the Self in us responds to the touch of God's Love and awakes to recognise that the love it feels is the Love it receives—it is then "at one" with God, and its full powers are alive. Self is lost in God. We cease to be self-conscious because we have become God-conscious and utterly acquiescent. The difference between the two seemingly similar methods is the difference between life and death. I was in the grip of death, as so many others have been from the same cause, without, alas! attaining my ultimate deliverance.

I remember leaving my governess's presence and going to my room to reckon with myself and pray. I hated all she had said to me while believing it true and inevitable. If I would escape hell and find God I must do as she said—take my nature and crush it out. I think I cried a great deal at the horror of it all. I have since sympathised very much with the Psalmist when he asks God to "put his tears into a bottle" as a record of his sufferings. For some time a settled gloom came over me, eclipsing everything. I could see no way out of the impenetrable fog. During the holidays this same lady sent me a tract on "Justification by Faith," by a since famous divine. Oh, that tract! Had it been written in Hebrew I could have as easily understood it. When we met again at school, my governess came one night and sat by my bedside, to serve her own soul rather than mine, I think, by talking to me about religion. She asked me what I thought of the tract she had sent me. I was vague in my reply. Honestly, I loathed it and all its brimstone-breathing brethren—but I dared not tell her so. Then we spoke about what I had done during the holidays. Among other things I told her how I had not gone to a certain dance to which I had been asked. There must have



been an inflection of regret in my voice as I spoke which prompted her to put the question very earnestly, "And did you *want* to go?" Truth compelled me to say "Yes." "Then," said my soul-seeking guide and comforter, "I regret to tell you you are not saved!" Now, she was a kind woman and a good woman who spoke. She thought she was doing God service. But anyone will see from this how adroitly the Evil One can make pious people do his work and be his most effectual agents!

Like King Hezekiah, I turned my face to the wall, after she had pronounced my sentence, with a feeling of dumb agony. What did it all mean, this terrible religion? I must give it up in despair. God was not for me nor I for God.

And yet as the flower to the sun my heart turned instinctively heavenward. As time went on I gave up all that was demanded. I crushed my nature and its natural tendencies. I loved music, the drama, dancing, pretty dresses. Away with them all—even to the lump of sugar in my tea and the butter on my bread during Lent—if they were the price and could delight an exacting Deity! I thought they were, and paid them; not cheerfully, I admit, but I paid them. I did not find the yoke of Christ easy nor His burden light. But I was desperately in earnest. So much so that once I nearly touched madness. I was spending the evening at a friend's house with a party of young people when our hostess proposed we should put aside the tables and have a dance. My human nature triumphed over my spiritual nature. I was only sixteen at the time, and I danced with the rest. After I got home and tried to say my prayers the enormity of my sin confronted me. Yes; I had sinned against the Holy Ghost. I was lost! For three days I was inconsolable. My reason wavered; my family were at a loss to know what had happened. I think I practically understood then the meaning of those words, "Satan hath desired to have thee that he may sift thee as wheat." It was a cruel experience. I cannot remember how I recovered, for the recollection of that time was a nightmare for years, during which I was always more or less in bondage to this species of diabolical spiritual tyranny.

One good came out of it all—one saving good. I looked into purity and felt and saw what it meant. The knowledge was salvation—a starting point from whence to travel and through which I was finally to see God. But the storm and stress were not over. I was yoked to this doctrine and that; what I could not understand was shelved as mystery to be received in faith. I was bewildered by all I saw and read and heard, until at length there came a memorable day when my whole nature revolted against the tyranny, and the awful question forced itself upon my mind as the soul-voice whispered: What is truth? What, if all these years you have been believing in and worshipping a lie! How then? I awoke once more determined to dispute every inch of the ground, and question for myself if what I had been taught to believe were indeed the truth or not. I resolved to believe in nothing which my *heart* did not sanction as consistent with these simple facts of the Gospel: God is "Our Father," and "God is Love." If the dogma did not square with these facts then perish the dogma! For God writes His truth on our *hearts*, or, nowhere. We must *feel* before we can believe.

In this spirit I began by looking into the doctrine of the Atonement and vicarious sacrifice. My heart refused to accept the gross interpretations of the pulpits. I remember once shocking an orthodox clergyman, father of a large family, by asking him if he, as a father, would require the blood of his eldest son to propitiate him for the wickedness of his other children. We were at supper at the time. I think the question rather spoilt it for him! He did not want the subject introduced to interfere with his enjoyments. The sphere for such topics was the pulpit and the church, where he could fulminate without retort or question. And yet our Christian religion is built up on such hypocrisies as this!

There came a day when I saw with exquisite gratitude and passionate adoration how Christ had died for me; how He had brought His Godhood into our fallen world that we might gain a glimpse of the Eternal and Ineffable Love of God, and be attracted to serve Him in the freedom of Love and thus be made partakers of His Divine Nature which He came to impart. But this Love made Flesh came into

collision with the forces of Hell that crushed Him before He could manifest in His Person what He has since accomplished by His Spirit. It was thus He died for the whole race, which is enriched everlastingly through the unprecedented sacrifice of His Love by which He has "drawn" and made us "one with Himself."

But before I gained this heaven of clear truth I had to descend into the hell of negation, about which I will tell you in my next.

#### MR. BUCHANAN'S OCCULT STORY.\*

Mr. Buchanan has two muses, one the lofty Urania, and the other a Muse-of-all-Work, fond of small jobs and prompt pay. He has adapted, or rather adopted, many plays, including one of Sheridan which he has attempted to make more brilliant by the addition of some Scotch "wut." Whether his occult story, "The Moment After," is due to the first or the second muse we cannot pronounce.

In it an Italian of quick passions, whether they incline to revenge or love, marries a young woman at the well-known sea port, Fordmouth. He is a pawnbroker and dealer in marine stores. He has for a rival one Phil Barton, a stout young sailor. Catherine, the wife, loved this sailor; and when he returns from a cruise she flirts desperately with him. Modena, the Italian, spurred to revenge, lays a trap for the lovers, and "knives" both, in the Italian fashion. He is tried for the double murder, and then the ghastly drama, the attempted execution of the alleged Babicombe assassin Lea is adapted—with a playwright we must use technical terms. Twice the rope breaks. The culprit recovers consciousness after a lapse of three or four minutes.

This story, powerful no doubt, gives Mr. Buchanan an opportunity of depicting the life after death. But here Urania and the Muse-of-all-Work are at issue. The Scotch poet inclines to the Spiritualistic view that our own deeds are our judges, but folks who invest shillings at the Right Honourable Mr. Smith's bookstalls love conventionality.

"I looked at Him and knew the face I had seen in the pictures, the man who was crucified on the cross.

"He cried 'there is Death and there is judgment.'"

Thus Modena records his experience of the next world and confirms the pulpit idea of Jesus as the pagan Minos.

But the conventional Jesus of the story has a comparative sinecure. In the three or four minutes that Modena is unconscious on the scaffold he goes through an agony of remorse. This seems to extend over many, many years, for time, as Mr. Buchanan tells us, does not really exist. The murderer is pursued by the ghosts of his victims over dreary wastes. At last he obtains pardon. But if three minutes after his execution the vilest murderer will obtain this "pardon" we may ask of what use is the conventional hell, the conventional Minos, the conventional devil? A fine story has been marred.

#### THE MONTH'S MAGAZINES.

The following articles will interest our readers:—

- Bad Air and Bad Health. "Contemporary Review."
- Harold Wager and Hon. Auberon Herbert.
- May Day on Magdalen Tower. "Contemporary Review."
- Archdeacon Farrar on Holman Hunt's Picture.
- Changes of Orthodoxy in England. "Forum." Dr. Momerie.
- The Physical Conscience. "National Review." Dr. Arabella Kenealy.
- The Mystery of Birth. "New Review." Grant Allen.
- The Simian Tongue. "New Review." Professor R. L. Garner.
- Witnesses to the Unseen. "Nineteenth Century." W. Ward.
- Napoleon's Views of Religion. "North American Review." H. A. Taine.
- Abraham Lincoln. "Westminster Review." Theodore Stanton.
- Mind and Matter in Relation to Hypnotism. "Reveu des Deux Mondes." Alfred Foville.
- Holy Wells, their Legends and Superstitions. "Antiquary." R. C. Hope.
- The Faith Doctor. "Century Magazine." Edward Eggleston.

\* "The Moment After." By Robert Buchanan. (William Heinemann.)



## MADAME BLAVATSKY.

The character sketch in the June number of the "Review of Reviews" is Madame Blavatsky, written by Mr. Sinnett with an editorial introduction. Mr. Stead has fallen under the influence of the great seeress, which few who knew her escaped. He makes short work of the Society for Psychical Research and its Coulomb-cum-Teacup report which few read and by which none were influenced after the "great impostor" came to London and lived down the pettifogging pin-prickings of Mr. Richard Hodgson. A joke about a teacup does not dispose of Theosophy, Mr. Stead opines, nor of the remarkable woman "whose death deprived London of one of the most remarkable of its inhabitants."

Madame Blavatsky was a great woman. She was not the faultless monster whom the world ne'er saw, and it must be admitted she was in more senses than one something of a monster. She was huge in body, and in her character, alike in its strength and weakness, there was something of the Rabelaisian gigantesque. But if she had all the nodosity of the oak, she was not without its strength; and if she had the contortions of the Sibyl, she possessed somewhat of her inspiration.

Of Madame Blavatsky the wonder-worker I knew nothing; I did not go to her seeking signs, and most assuredly no sign was given me. She neither doubled a teacup in my presence nor grew a gold ring out of a rosebud, nor did she even cause the familiar raps to be heard. All these manifestations seemed as the mere trivialities, the shavings, as it were, thrown off from the beam of cedar wood which she was fashioning as one of the pillars in the Temple of Truth. I do not remember ever referring to them in our conversations, and it is slightly incomprehensible to me how anyone can gravely contend that they constitute her claim to respect. It would be almost as reasonable to contend that Christianity is based upon the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius.

What Madame Blavatsky did was an immeasurably greater thing than the doubling of teacups. She made it possible for some of the most cultivated and sceptical men and women of this generation to believe—believe ardently, to an extent that made them proof against ridicule and disdainful of persecution, that not only does the invisible world that encompasses us contain intelligences vastly superior to our own in knowledge of the Truth, but that it is possible for man to enter into communion with these hidden and silent ones, and to be taught of them the Divine mysteries of Time and of Eternity. She not only made it possible for them to believe it, but she made them believe it, and founded what was to all intents and purposes a Church upon that article of belief. That is a great achievement, and one which *a priori* would have been laughed at as impossible. Yet she performed that miracle. Madame Blavatsky, a Russian, suspected of being a spy, converted leading Anglo-Indians to a passionate belief in her Theosophy mission, even when the Jingo fever was hottest, and in her declining years she succeeded in winning over to the new-old religion Annie Besant, who had for years fought in the forefront of the van of militant atheism.

A woman who could achieve these two things was a woman indeed.

Mr. Stead has much to say that is very apposite and well put on this head. For phenomena, signs and wonders, teacups and astral bells he cared nothing, and of these he saw nothing: but for "the wonderful and powerful personality," fiery, impulsive, passionate, the marvellous talker, the magnetic presence, "full of failings and personally the very reverse of beautiful," he had a great regard. "She was unique, but she was intensely human, and a woman to her heart's core. I cannot do justice to her many-sided character."

Mr. Sinnett's story is clear-cut and very readable, though it has the disadvantage of being a twice-told tale, except as respects the later years of the life that it recounts.

Only four or five years ago she seemed fairly overwhelmed by the tide of obloquy turned against her by the Psychical Research Society. I visited her at Wurzburg in 1886, and then she had very few friends left, very little purpose in this life except to write her long-promised book, "The Secret Doctrine," and was spending her time in almost complete seclusion; while the world at large spoke of her as a detected impostor, and the Report against her, by a representative of the Society just named, was complacently regarded by its author as having put an end once for all to one of the most extraordinary delusions of the age. Bit by bit the famous Report has been torn to pieces by competent critics, till hardly a rag of it remains. The inextinguishable force of Madame Blavatsky's character has borne her forward and far more than recovered for her all her lost ground. She has been for the last three years the centre of a devoted circle of disciples, the nucleus of a great organisation of

occult students, which included over 1,000 persons. The weekly lectures given in her presence by her Theosophical pupils have been attended by crowded audiences. Never before in her life has she been made so much of as during these last few years, when the vigour of her mind, the irresistible personal influence she exhaled, have simply pushed into the background, as so much silly impertinence, the accusations of fraud and trickery which looked at one time formidable enough to menace her with annihilation as a public teacher.

That is a fair summary of the situation viewed in retrospect and with the advantage that death gives to the purged eye. There is no need now to dwell upon the petty details that alone occupied the view of Mr. Richard Hodgson. The faultiness of his methods is due to the character of his mind and the instructions that he received, if we are to judge by the methods of all investigators accredited by the Society which he represented. There is no grasp in them, no breadth of view, nothing but a fidgetty labouring of detail that bears show of carefulness while the real issues are ignored. "Vulgar cheating" (says Mr. Sinnett) "does not bring forth ever-increasing devotion and respect as its fruit. It is impossible to account for Madame Blavatsky in any intelligent way except by regarding her as a great spiritual reality." At her cremation her disciples summed up her record thus: "A clean life, an open mind, a pure heart, an eager intellect, an unveiled spiritual perception, a brotherliness for all, a courageous endurance of personal injustice, a constant eye to the ideal of human progress." It is not our business to criticise over the ashes of one who was greatly misunderstood and greatly loved from opposite points of view. She was too big not to provoke opposition, too outspoken not to make enemies; but the opposition dwindled and became foolish without much effort to annihilate it, and the enemies bit a file when they tried their teeth on their great opponent. Her methods, too, in her worst tea-cup and card-case days were open to suspicion, but she out-lived all that. Meantime the friends grew and multiplied, and it is pleasant to think that a stormy life, all too full of tempest and disaster, mellowed towards its close and was soothed by the affectionate regard of many loving friends.

## HAUNTING.

The following, sent by a correspondent, is narrated in the "Boston Daily Globe":—

NEW YORK, May 11th.—A pretty frame cottage on the meadow road near the old Brinkerhoff homestead in Rutherford, N.J., owned by Professor Garrett Alyea and occupied by Joseph Kling and his family, is the centre of attraction in that village just now, because of the spooks that are supposed to haunt it. It has long been haunted, and rents for a mere song.

Fred, the eldest son, and Mrs. Kling report a mysterious affair which happened last week. The former says he had just got into bed when he felt something press down upon him, and the harder he tried to move, the stronger the grip of something became. He could move his arms and did move them, but felt nothing. The light was burning dimly, but he could see nothing in human or animal shape.

Then he tried to cry out, but his power of speech had left him, and for what seemed like half an hour he lay helpless. Then he felt the pressure being removed, and as soon as he found himself free he jumped out of bed, and, turning up the lamp, searched the room.

Suddenly he heard a piercing scream. He thought it sounded like his mother's voice, and, rushing to her room, he found her almost in convulsions. As soon as she could be quieted she said that as she was about to get into bed the room suddenly brightened up as if by electricity, and she saw in one corner, near the ceiling, a death's head, surrounded by a ring of fire. She screamed, and when she threw herself on the bed the death's head vanished.

All that night the family were kept awake by rumbling sounds below—heavy thuds. Then a scraping of a trowel over a stone wall. The sounds ceased as soon as any of them went down cellar to investigate. The next night a rat terrier was put down in the cellar, they thinking the cause of the trouble was rats. The sounds continued and the dog was taken from the cellar trembling with fear.

One theory of the mystery is that the noises are made by the spirit of Thomas Lynch, a farmer, who occupied the house a long time, and when he died he refused to divulge the hiding place of his buried wealth, as it was known he had considerable, and none of it was ever found.



OFFICE OF "LIGHT,"  
2, DUKE STREET,  
ADELPHI, W.C.

## Light:

EDITED BY "M. A. (OXON.)"

SATURDAY, JUNE 20th, 1891.

TO CONTRIBUTORS.—Communications intended to be printed should be addressed to the Editor, 2, Duke-street, Adelphi. It will much facilitate the insertion of suitable articles if they are under two columns in length. Long communications are always in danger of being delayed, and are frequently declined on account of want of space, though in other respects good and desirable. Letters should be confined to the space of half a column to ensure insertion.

Business communications should in all cases be addressed to Mr. B. D. Godfrey, 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, W.C., and not to the Editor.

LAURENCE OLIPHANT.\*

FIRST NOTICE.

The tragedy of a many-sided life told by a distinguished novelist with all her practised skill. Much the most interesting book of the season; interesting by reason of the picturesque person with whom it deals, but far more interesting as a psychical study of a rare character. A man who had everything on his side, a fine presence, a fascinating manner, friends of all ranks, even the most illustrious the world over, a brilliant essayist, novelist, traveller, diplomatist, with a career opening for him in Parliament, a welcome guest in every circle, charming in conversation and richly stored in mind. Such on one side was Laurence Oliphant. Reverse the medal and we have this admirable Crichton under the iron heel of an American fanatic who was but little known outside of the narrow circle of the enthusiasts who owned his sway; yielding unquestioning obedience to his despotic rule, submitting his tenderly nurtured mother and the wife whom he loved with unvarying affection to the same merciless sway; separating from that wife at the autocratic dictation of this man who had enslaved him and played upon him as the hypnotiser treats his "subject," making him execute any grotesque antic that he chose to suggest: peddling oranges on a local railway, doing the most menial farm work, sleeping in a loft on straw, surrendering all he had to swell the coffers of this tinsel Pope. Such is the other side of Laurence Oliphant's bewildering character. We shall hereafter have reason to make some attempt to furnish a key to this perplexing problem. For the present we are to deal with the sunnier side of Oliphant's chequered life.

A rapid sketch is all that is necessary to give some idea of the early years before the great renunciation of all that had hitherto filled his life. The son of Sir Anthony Oliphant, Chief Justice of Ceylon, and of Maria, daughter of Colonel Campbell of the 72nd Highlanders, he was born at Cape Town, where his father was then Attorney-General, and whence he was transferred as Chief Justice to Ceylon. The boy was sent at an early age with his mother to England, and there we find him at ten years of age at Condie, the ancestral home. It is worth noting, as a possible factor in the formation of his character, that according to the strictest interpretation of that narrow sectarian term his parents were Evangelicals. It may be that the strong religious instincts which cropped out in all his life may have owed their development to the beliefs of his parents. There has always been in the strict Evangelical a tendency to introspection, to a morbid self-analysis, to an attitude of the soul which is interior, and but little concerned with external ceremonialism and outward act, that may throw some light on the first causes which led the brilliant man of the world to concern himself in the plenitude of his fame with his

soul's state and relation with God. The direction given to his mind by his parents made him, perhaps, discontented with the religious condition of the Church as he discerned it, and drove him from the dry ceremonialism from which the grieved spirit had departed to plain dealing with his own soul in the light of the eternal verities as he understood them.

In the late winter of 1841, not having made much of school—he says in one of his school-boy letters that he was a "horrid sumer," i.e., arithmetician—the boy set out to join his parents in Ceylon, where, after a three months' voyage (no P. and O. then!), he duly arrived, and entered on that close companionship with his mother which was never interrupted voluntarily throughout their lives. She was only eighteen years older than the "Darling" (as he was affectionately called), and he was placed in a position of influence and equality which was not very safe for such a child. He kept her in order too when needful, and no doubt she wanted it sometimes, though *he* was not the fit person to assume command. Once, it is told, she came into the school-room to order the tutor to alter the scheme of work for the boys in some way. They were present and he was vexed. The lady was injudicious and persistent, and a quarrel was imminent, when the young diplomat rose and with a fine bow offered his arm to his mother conducting her out of the room with a "Mamma, this is no place for you." This was the desultory education that Laurence got, no proper training and no real instruction except what he picked up for himself. "He was one of the pupils of Life, educated mainly by what his keen eyes saw, and his quick ears heard, and his clear understanding and lively wit picked up amid human intercourse of all kinds."

It was in 1846 that Laurence first saw the wider world of Europe. He had been sent home with a view to a University course, but his father shortly after returned to England on a two years' holiday and took his son with him to the Continent instead. No doubt the experience was valuable: whether, as his biographer speculates, the profounder culture and systematised training of the University might not have been even more profitable we do not pause to inquire. At the end of this "education by contact," Laurence became his father's secretary and returned to Ceylon as a practising barrister. This lasted till he was twenty-one (1850) when Jung Bahadour appeared on the scene and carried off young Oliphant in his train to India. They became great friends, and this rapid and brilliant rush through India, with all the prestige of a prominent position and the excitement of novel sport and big game, was at once the first of many "Episodes in a Life of Adventure," and the commencement of his literary career. It is characteristic of him in the midst of this whirl that he does not abandon his self-analysis, though he confesses to finding it "difficult to practise habits of self-examination riding upon an elephant, with a companion who is always talking or singing within a few feet."

In August, 1852, we find Laurence with a friend, Oswald Smith, touring in Russia, after being called to the Scotch Bar, and still eating his dinners at Lincoln's Inn. His book, "The Russian shores of the Black Sea," fixed the impressions of the tour, especially of the Crimea, so soon to be a land of absorbing interest to Europe. This brought him under the notice of the authorities and he was summoned to give Lord Raglan such particulars as he could about Sebastopol. While he was waiting for his knowledge to be utilised or for his promised post as "Times" correspondent, Lord Elgin swooped down and carried him off as secretary to his special mission to Washington. We have no space to dwell on the treaty "floated through on champagne," or the vivacious secretary's vivid sketches of society fun, interspersed with comments on pretty girls, dances, ices and cocktails, varied with reflections on the "difficulty of realising divine things," which, indeed, is conceivable under

\* "Memoir of the Life of Laurence Oliphant and of Alice Oliphant, his wife." By Margaret Oliphant. Two volumes, one guinea. Blackwoods.



the circumstances, and prolonged exposition of Psalm cxliii. as wonderfully meeting his case. It is an epitome of his life, this graphic chapter rich with his own letters. Champagne and ices followed by cxliii. Psalm! The world and its delirious pleasures succeeded by Harris and his squalid fanaticism.

Home again, the irrepressible traveller began to pester Lord Clarendon to send him on a mission to Schamyl. He did, as a matter of fact, send him with a letter to Lord Stratford de Redclyffe, who invited him to go in his suite to the seat of war. He accepted. "I have been lying on my back for an hour reading and praying. I think it has done me good." And so he went; and was sent with Mr. Alison, one of Lord Stratford's staff, on a special mission to Circassia, and kept cooling his heels about the coast for the next three months. Then we have more moralising about his soul's state, and one remarkable confession of belief as to the conversion of a friend to Romanism. "It is because he has not a strong will of his own that he wants to be dictated to on points of faith. Whately says it is the greatest exercise of a man's private judgment to submit it to another. It is only the exercise of a weak judgment." As one reads this clear-cut utterance and allows the eye to wander down the vista of the future the outlet is blocked by the menacing apparition of Harris.

In 1857 came the mission to China as secretary to his old chief, Lord Elgin, on which we need not dwell. It is interesting to note that his first appearance among the gilded youths of the mission was signalised by inquiries about their spiritual state, mystical disquisitions, and discourses on Spiritualism. He had burst the Evangelical bonds that had bound him, and was using his new-found freedom to ponder mysteries which were tabooed by those who still wore the swaddling clothes of the rather mawkish pietism from which he had escaped. His letters at this period are "filled above everything else with his religious views and feelings: the revelation of what he has come to in the way of conviction after much struggling and tortures of doubt—and his indignant disapproval of the hackneyed types of Christianity with which he is acquainted." Some of his letters reveal the profound workings of a deeply religious and wholly sincere mind. For, let it be said here, and let it be borne in mind throughout, in estimating this complex character, Laurence Oliphant was before and beyond all an absolutely sincere man. He was accustomed to face himself, and that interview sometimes requires no little courage. He had no unexplored corners in his soul where spiritual dust and dirt might accumulate. He did strange things, he acted sometimes in a way to puzzle men, but let no man impeach the perfect sincerity of that brave soul to whom the world and the things of the world were infinitely unimportant in their most luscious profusion compared with a knowledge of self and a glimpse of his future destiny. "I would willingly go into a dungeon for the rest of my days if I was vouchsafed a supernatural revelation of a faith." It is a modern Paul, "content to be accursed," if only the enduring realities may find an abiding place in his soul. "I would sooner go to the stake than do violence to what I believe to be the yearnings and whisperings, weak and imperfect, no doubt, of my divine nature."

He is conscious of being in a transition state. "The influence of early life and the constraints which one set of opinions imposed are loosened." And he had not yet got the firm hold on the new set that was required to bring its influence to bear on life and conversation. An interesting letter (p. 213) we would willingly dwell upon did space permit. In it he expresses his disgust with the "professors of a creed which has no power over them." He adds suggestively, "It is a mistake to confound religion with theology. It is the fashion to regard the former as springing

from the latter, whereas if you have the former it makes little difference what you profess as to the latter." He cuts himself clear of confusion between the religion of Christ and the practice of the professors of Christianity. The inspiration of the Bible he quite believes in, but regards it "in a particular way, as the same thing as intuition," citing Morell and Theodore Parker as authorities. The Apostles he regards as having caught spiritual repose from the mind of Christ, "reflecting more accurately than was ever done before or since the mind of God." When this was interrupted, as in the quarrel between Peter and Paul, the harmony ceased, the perfect image of the Divine was no longer reflected. Inspiration, he avers, depends on the medium: he may be polluted—"Of the value, for instance, of Solomon's inspiration we must judge for ourselves"—and then the stream of inspiration is polluted too. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels."

It is not necessary to dwell on his experiences in China except in so far as we find traces of this soul development that give us somewhat of a key to what we shall have to consider later. The glimpses are not few. "The Bishop has appointed a day of humiliation . . . so we are to humble ourselves to-day and make up for it next week by sending a few thousands of our fellow-creatures into the next world." On this subject he has some strong words. "The idea is that you are appeasing an angry Deity, which is the worst of all." His mother had written him news of the death of an old friend, Dr. Clark. He responds, "I have no doubt that Tom is often present with us, it is possible exercising some influence for good over our lives. . . . I cannot talk of 'poor Tom' or call the news sad." There is much more which, as his biographer writes, shows "how early and how independently the germs which were so to develop in after-life had gained possession of his mind—unusual matter to occupy the mind of a young man." "Reason tempered by intuition was the rule to which he had attained, alone and without spiritual guidance of any kind."

"At this juncture his father suddenly died. At sea at the time, Laurence came on deck one morning and informed his comrades that he had seen his father in the night and that he was dead. The date was taken down and on their arrival in England it was found that Sir Anthony Oliphant had indeed died on that night. His eyes were already open.

After some time he went out to Japan as First Secretary of Legation, and he arrived at Yeddo at the end of June, 1861. Then occurred the attack which is one of the best known incidents in Oliphant's life, the particulars of which do not here concern us. He was badly wounded and returned home with news of the condition of the Embassy. Ten days he had been in Japan, and "this was all the actual and formal employment given him directly by the Government without the intervention of any such powerful and friendly patron as Lord Elgin." Richard Burton over again. *Borné* is the official intellect, and swathed withal in red tape. To Japan he never returned, and his diplomatic career was closed. After more adventure, without which he was never quite happy, he returned to England, wrote a good deal, and prepared for a Parliamentary career. Just as his brilliant "Piccadilly" electrified London there came upon him that strange crisis which brought him under the influence of Harris, a development which we must discuss in a subsequent notice of this fascinating biography.

#### CONVERSAZIONE OF THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

The closing assembly of the above society will be held at the Banqueting Hall, St. James's Hall (Regent-street entrance), on the evening of Thursday next, June 25th, at 7 p.m. An address will be delivered by the Rev. J. Page Hopps on "A Study of the Old Testament Jehovah by Spirit Light." Music and refreshments during the evening. Applications for admission (with a stamped addressed envelope for reply) are to be sent to Mr. B. D. Godfrey, at 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, W.C.



## OMENS.

We vary our collection of Dreams by the following Omens derived from a paper called "Spare Moments":—

One very curious notion which we find in this and foreign countries relates to the exit of the soul from the body at death, it being supposed that the departure of life is delayed so long as any locks or bolts in the house are fastened.

This popular belief that the protracted struggle between life and death is painfully prolonged by keeping the door of the apartment shut was received as certain by the superstitious eld of Scotland.

A correspondent of "Notes and Queries" tells us that he had for a long time visited a poor man who was dying of a very painful disease, and was daily expecting his death. Upon calling one morning to see his poor friend, his wife informed him that she thought he would have died during the night, and, consequently, she and her friends unfastened every lock in the house.

On inquiring the reason, he was informed that any hole or lock fastened was supposed to cause uneasiness to, and hinder the departure of, the soul.

This is a common superstition in France and Germany, and exists even among the Chinese, who make a hole in the roof to let out the soul at death. The practice originated in the conception of the soul as being somewhat material and substantial. Indeed, even to this day, a German peasant considers it wrong to slam a door for fear of accidentally pinching a soul in it.

In some parts of Holland, when a child is dying, persons shade it from the parents' gaze with their hands, the soul being believed to linger in the body as long as a loving and sympathetic eye is fixed upon it.

In Germany there is a notion that if anyone who sheds tears over an expiring friend does not wipe them off, he enhances the difficulty of death's last struggle.

Another very common superstition is that death announces its approach by certain mysterious noises. These, too, it is said, are sometimes caused by the dying persons themselves, who make known their departure to their friends in such strange sounds. Countless instances are on record of such supposed forebodings of death.

Occasionally, too, we even hear of the credulous actually looking for them, believing strongly in their reality. A curious example of this species of folk-lore took place in connection with the death of Mr. Smith, the eminent Assyriologist. This famous scholar died at Aleppo, on August 19th, 1876, at or about the hour of six in the afternoon.

On the same day, and between three-quarters of an hour and an hour later, a friend and fellow-worker of Mr. Smith's—Dr. Delitzsch—was passing within a stone's-throw of the house in which Mr. Smith lived whilst in London, when he suddenly heard his own name uttered aloud in a "most piercing cry," which thrilled him to the marrow. The fact impressed him so strongly that he looked at his watch, noted the hour, and although he did not mention the circumstance at the time, recorded it in his note-book. He afterwards found out that Mr. Smith breathed his last at precisely the same hour.

Again, it is related that on board one of her Majesty's ships lying off Portsmouth, the officers being one day at the mess-table, a young lieutenant suddenly laid down his knife and fork, pushed away his plate, and turned extremely pale. He then rose from the table, covered his face with his hands, and retired.

The president of the mess, supposing him to be ill, sent to make inquiries. At first he was unwilling to reply; but, on being pressed, he confessed that he had been seized by a sudden and irresistible impression that a brother he had in India was dead.

"He died," said he, "on August 12th, at six o'clock. I am perfectly convinced of it." No argument could overthrow his conviction, which, in due course of time, was verified to the letter.

Again, the wraith, or spectral appearance of a person shortly to die, is an object of belief in this country as well as abroad.

In Ireland these apparitions are called "fetches," in Cumberland "swarths," and in Yorkshire "waffs."

Popular omens of death are innumerable. One perhaps, which is more fully believed in than any other, is the "death-watch."

This, although known to be caused by a certain beetle belonging to the timber-boring genus *Anobium*, is a cause of fear to many who have a given notion that:

"The solemn death-watch clicks the hour of death."

This superstition is mentioned by Baxter, in his "World of Spirits." He says, "There are many things that ignorance causeth multitudes to take for prodigies. I have had many discreet friends that have been affrightened with the noise called a death-watch, whereas I have since, near three years ago, oft found by trial that it is a noise made upon paper by a little, nimble, running worm, and it is most usually behind a paper pasted to a wall, and especially to a wainscoat; and it is seldom, if ever, heard but in the heat of summer."

It is generally agreed by entomologists to be the call of these insects to one another, which is caused in the following way:

The insect raises itself upon its hind legs, with the body somewhat inclined, and beats its head with great force upon the surface near it, and its strokes are so powerful as to make a considerable noise.

Another almost equally popular omen of death is the howling of a dog at night—a very old superstition, and not confined to our own country. It is mentioned by Virgil in allusion to the Roman misfortunes in the Pharsalic war, and Pausanian relates how, before the destruction of the Messenians, the dogs set up a fiercer howling than at any other time. According to a quaint German idea, if a dog howls looking downwards it portends a death, but if upwards, then a recovery from sickness.

Another omen of death is the hovering of birds around a house, and their tapping against a window-pane. The crowing of the cock, too, at the dead of night is regarded as equally ominous.

Mice are also said to portend death. On one occasion a poor old woman in Devonshire, when speaking about the mice in her room, exclaimed, "I pray God at a night, when I hears them running about, to keep 'em down."

It is a common notion that to kill a cricket is highly unlucky.

Thus Gay, in his "Pastoral Dirge," among many prognostications of death, gives the following—

"And shrilling crickets in the chimney cried."

In the North of England, a swallow flying down the chimney is very ominous; while in most places the breaking of a looking-glass is a certain forerunner of death.

Among the countless other superstitions associated with man's decease, may be mentioned one prevalent in Lancashire, where it is believed that to build, or even to rebuild, a house is always fatal to one member of the family—generally to the one who may have been the principal promoter in wishing for the building or alteration.

Fires and candles afford presages of death—coffins flying out of the former, and winding-sheets guttering down the latter.

A Sussex piece of folk-lore tells us that if the church clock strikes twelve while a hymn is being sung in the morning service, a death will most surely ensue during the following week.

High spirits have been considered a passage of death, a notion alluded to by Shakespeare in "Romeo and Juliet" (v. 3)—

"How oft, when men are at the points of death  
Have they been merry! Which their keepers call  
A lightning before death."

Indeed there are numerous instances on record of this belief, which still remains a psychological question. Tyler, in his "History of Scotland," speaking of the death of King James I., says, "On the fatal evening (February 20th, 1436), the revels of the Court were kept up to a late hour. . . . The Prince himself appears to have been in unusually gay and cheerful spirits. He even jested, if we may believe the contemporary manuscript, about a prophecy which had appeared that a King should that year be slain."

In the evidence given at the inquest upon the bodies of four persons killed by an explosion at a firework manufactory in Bermondsey, October 12th, 1848, one of the witnesses stated, "On Friday night they were all very merry, and Mrs. B. said she feared something would happen before they went to bed, because they were so happy."

Many families, it is said, take their special warnings of death, which assume special shapes.



Thus, the ancient baronet's family, Clifton, of Clifton Hall, in Nottinghamshire, is forewarned of approaching death by the sturgeon forcing its way up the river Trent, on whose bank that mansion is situated.

Prince, in his "Worthies of Devon," tells us "There is a family of considerable standing at South Tawton, of which this strange and wonderful thing is recorded.

"That at the death of any of them a bird with a white breast is seen for a while fluttering about their beds, and then suddenly to vanish away."

Family omens of this kind are very common, and it is unfortunate that the great majority of them have been transmitted to us without the particulars that gave rise to them.

In most cases it is impossible to find any connection between the omen and the family.

### ON SPIRITUALISM.

"The Review of Reviews" has the following comment on recent articles of Julian Hawthorne and Minot Savage in the "Arena":—

#### IS SPIRITUALISM WORTH INVESTIGATING?

Mr. Julian Hawthorne writes a brief article in which he maintains that Spiritualism is not worth the trouble of looking into. The Rev. Minot Savage, who has been investigating the phenomena of Spiritualism for fifteen years, replies, maintaining that nothing is better worth while investigating than Spiritualism. Mr. Savage's chief point is that of all problems which can exercise a man's mind, nothing weighs so heavily on the human heart as the doubt whether or not personal identity continues after death. To establish that certainty would help the world to a practical trust in the justice of the government of the universe and lift the level of the world's life. No doubt this is true, but the question which Mr. Savage does not answer conclusively is whether the attempt to find a definite solution of this problem by the investigation of the phenomena of Spiritualism has ever really helped any considerable number of human beings to peace, trust, confidence, and strength, or any other blessing. There are men who maintain that for one person which such investigation has helped there are a dozen whom it has hindered. I do not say this in any way deprecating the investigation of any and all phenomena—that is a simple duty, and there may lie in the solution of these phenomena a clue to the great secret of the universe, but as yet very little progress seems to have been made towards finding it.

Now it is impossible to enter into any exhaustive treatment of the vast questions involved in this paragraph, but some things may be fitly said, briefly and without elaboration of proof, which can be given if the statements are challenged.

1. Spiritualism by its evidence of perpetuated existence after death (loosely called immortality) affords scientific demonstration of what has hitherto been mere matter of faith.
2. This investigation, with the meagre results already attained, is confessedly of paramount importance to man. No nobler subject, none of more vital and permanent interest to him, can engage his attention.
3. The results already obtained, conclusive as they are in our opinion, would have been far greater if the investigation had been conducted on reasonable principles and methods, and had not been hampered by popular prejudice, and impeded by the fact that it has been, until lately, largely in the hands of incompetent persons.
4. With these disadvantages Spiritualism has won an amount of attention, has commanded the acceptance of competent inquirers, and has secured for itself an influential position unparalleled in like time by any similar subject during the half century that it has been before the world.
5. In spite of all disadvantages accruing from faulty methods of investigation, from irrational enthusiasm, and from uncompromising opposition, there remains a body of evidence for the reality of its claims and a mass of spirit-teaching of a high, ethical, moral, and religious character, which has "helped a considerable number of human beings to peace, trust, confidence, and strength," which they did not succeed in getting from any other source.

6. This has been effected by a realisation of the truth that earthly life is a training school for a life that is to come, a continuation of the present existence, in which each soul takes of necessary consequence the place for which its acts and habits here have fitted it. Furthermore, by a realisation of another truth, that each act bears its fruit and entails its inevitable consequence from which none can escape, or compound for its results by any compact with another. Each soul must bear its own burden.

7. These cardinal teachings that spirits have given to us are not to be put aside by the fact that frivolous and insufficient tampering with the subject by flippant investigation through imperfectly developed mediums, has introduced into the inquiry an element of uncertainty owing to communications from undeveloped spirits. When inquiry is sane and sincere the results arrived at are practically uniform.

8. "For one person whom such investigation has helped there are a dozen whom it has hindered." If this be so, the methods of investigation and the investigators themselves have been at fault. Spiritualism is not an after-dinner plaything, and if treated as such is apt to entail results even more disastrous than Tranby Croft baccharat.

These propositions, to add no more, are susceptible of easy proof. That the outside critic misses his way in respect of this most perplexing and tangled subject is not to be wondered at. But a little study will convince an honest man, who will devote pains to the matter, that Spiritualism, in virtue of the nobility of its teachings, "has the promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come."

"M.A. (Oxon.)"

#### A VOICE FROM AN AGE OF PESSIMISM.

If from the stifling, steaming valleys of sense we ascend to the hills of aspiration, where our spirits are freed for some precious moments in a lifted horizon to scan a rare and royal perspective, yet what is the meaning of it, the worth of it—nay, what is the very beauty of it, if we may not possess it for ever? In these moments, so rich and strange, we are divinely intoxicated with infinite perfectings. Colour, tone, and passion, mood, perfume, and insight glow swiftly upon us with mysterious attractiveness and powerful divining. We have seen the Unknown God. His very breath has filled our nostrils. We have tasted of water from the wells of eternal life. And then?—alas, the stirrings melt away into the impalpable azure, and once more we are dragged down into the filthy abyss. The crowded dream of glorious imaginings dissolves into the sordid hatefulness of our waking doom. Then pronounce the Philistines: Dream not; all dreaming is unholy—that is unhealthy. Dream not, but live and be happy. Bah! go tell the waif of hunger standing before a baker's window that his faint, sick longing is begotten of unreason, and counsel him to resign his weary need. When, with philosophic effrontery, you have conjured away his emptiness of stomach, return to the sufferers of soul, and tell them whether it is possible to be happy—whether, this granted, it is desirable to be happy. Tell them what happiness is, and whether the knowledge of happiness comes with the attainment thereof. And recall Carlyle's rebuke for the popular wailings of Byron, and justify the right to be happy.

On what shall men set their affections? On transient things of flesh and sense, or on the eternal Unseen, which is the best of our humanity? And some will say the hidden treasure is God, and some will say it is morality. What God?—which morality? If the answer be that the first is Being, and the second is Doing, an endless crop of queries are inevitable. We all read our own natures into the Infinite. We all shall answer as we desire. And the inspired majority of the people elects for material prosperity; more money, less labour; shorter Parliaments and longer holidays. Material prosperity—that is the password to the Holy of Holies. The voice of the people is the voice of God, and the voice of the people is lifted up in exultation for more wages, holidays, Parliaments, and babblers therein, all forgetful that industry, heroism, and virtue are becoming as vain and empty words.—Amos Waters in "The Agnostic Journal."



## THE CAMERA AND THE FAKIR.

In corroboration of the paragraph sent by Mr. Coates to us and printed in "LIGHT" (June 13th, p. 286) he now forwards to us a paper called "The People's Friend" (John Leng and Co., Bank-street, Dundee, and 186, Fleet-street, London, February 2nd, 1891), in which the editor details what he calls "The latest American hoax." The article is too long for citation, but the gist of it is that the editor was convinced that the whole thing was a hoax, and the following extract gives the manner in which the hoax was exploded. As it has gained much publicity we feel glad to reproduce what is given below. Mr. Julian Hawthorne has not yet explained his part in the questionable transaction:—

But it is one thing to be convinced in your own mind that a thing is a hoax; it is quite a different thing to convince other people; and it was very soon made apparent that the article had found not only believers in its authenticity but that numerous papers and journals were doing their utmost to disseminate the hoax, and to make as many people believe in it as possible, by the prominence they gave it, and by the remarks they sometimes made upon the subject. And not only so, but friends, knowing the interest we took in the subject, put the question—Did we believe in the article which had attracted their attention? and, of course, we had to enter into a long explanation to convince them that the thing was unworthy of their belief. The matter, in our estimation, grew a little serious when an article was sent in to the "Friend" for publication by a writer who treated the whole thing seriously, and wished to make his article public as a scientific fact; and also when a considerable amount of prominence was given to the original article in several, if not all, the photographic journals in this country. The "Photographic News" had a leaderette upon the subject, and a copy of that paper was addressed to us, the article being marked with a blue pencil, with the evident intention of attracting our attention to it.

"Photography" not only printed the original article, but in the number for December 18th, in a leaderette, they drew the attention of their readers to the fact that in the "Newcastle Weekly Chronicle" a correspondent, writing from Whitehaven, vouched for the accuracy of the article, and for the truth of the hypnotic solution of the mystery; and the whole thing was treated in so serious a vein that ordinary readers could come to no other conclusion than that here the mystery of Indian jugglery had at length been solved, and that photography had been the means of solving it, hypnotism being the basis of the mysteries. Under these circumstances we considered it to be our duty to endeavour to discover whether the article was genuine or not, and with this intention we addressed a letter to the editor of the "Chicago Tribune," in which the article first appeared, desiring the editor to send all the information he possibly could upon the subject, and another letter to the alleged discoverer, Mr. F. S. Ellmore, the son of W. Ellmore, stockbroker in Chicago, asking him as a favour to forward on loan one of the original Kodak negatives, the production of which we regarded as the crucial test of the whole affair, for we believed it to be next to impossible to construct a spurious negative. The following frank and open-minded letter we received in reply to the one we addressed to the editor of the "Tribune," and it settles the whole matter in a way that leaves no more to be said upon it.

"Chicago, December 14th, 1890.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Your letter of November 29th has been referred to me as the writer of the article on hypnotism you mention. The story was a bit of fiction dressed up to give it a semblance of fact, and was intended to present in an attractive form a theory I have had for some time. I see no reason why the skilled jugglers of the East might not have developed the hypnotic science to an extent unknown to the students of the West, and why they could not, with that advanced knowledge, employ hypnotism to assist them in their tricks. It occurred to me that an effective way to treat the matter would be to have a pencil sketch and a photograph of the performance made simultaneously, and that then, if the eye had been deceived, the camera would prove it. So the sketch was written, but as I made the name of the experimenter S. Ellmore (sell more), I imagined that the careful reader might see something in the name of the young man to suggest the idea that it was not, perhaps, "gospel truth." I am led to believe, however, judging from the number of letters the "Tribune" has had from various parts of the globe, that the little story attracted more attention than I dreamed it could, and that many of the readers accepted it as perfectly true. I am sorry that any one should have been deluded, but feel that if the story results in a test of the theory, the end may justify the means.—Sincerely yours,

"Mr. Andrew Stewart."

"JOHN E. WILKIE.

## SPIRITUALISM A RELIGION.

BY JOHN WETHERBEE.

A writer has stated lately in a short article, that not one in a hundred of all religious sects is really religious, and yet the word Church is magical in its power and influence over nine-tenths of the people at large; and he thinks Spiritualists ought to organise as a Church; but he adds that they are not ready for this yet, because less than one-half of well-informed Spiritualists are agreed that Spiritualism is a religion. I think it is eminently a religion. The word religion has been so spoiled by its evil associations and traditional persecutions that I have thought the word would injure Spiritualism, and I preferred to consider it a science, which, in its phenomena, it really is, founded on facts that appeal to the senses; it is a science as much as Astronomy, Geology, or Chemistry are, and these objective phenomena are its only distinguishing feature; its mental phenomena being defined by those called objective or physical. All its teachings, ethics, philosophy, and even its future life are common property with Christian teachings in general; when saying, therefore, that it is a science, one is on solid ground. Dr. Alfred R. Wallace begins his response in the "Christian Register" on immortality with these words: "Outside of Modern Spiritualism I know nothing in recognised science to support a belief in immortality, and though I consider it to be as truly an established experimental science as any other, it is not recognised as such by the scientific world." I think we can safely call it a science.

It is also a religion, and more emphatically a religion than any other in the world. So I have learned to consider Spiritualism as a religion, and as my religious belief. I will not attempt to define religion. Emma Hardinge once said, religion is life; that includes it, but is hardly a definition. A Unitarian minister of the free religious order, at a late anniversary, said religion was eternal and its last word would never be spoken. Theodore Parker once expressed the same idea, but with more beauty, in these words: "Religion is above all institutions, creeds, ancient views of God, and many other apparently permanent ideas, and can never fail. They shall perish, but religion endure; they shall wax old like a garment; they shall be changed, and the places that know them shall know them no more for ever, but religion is ever the same and its years shall have no end."

"There is no religion higher than truth," is the motto of the Theosophists. The truth-seeker is the only God-seeker. Thomas Paine gave its best definition when he said: "The world is my country, and to do good is my religion." It may be a glittering generality to say religion is love of God, or that God is love, for the human mind is not a unit on God, or love. But all these ideas are pointers to a definition. If death ends all, religion is a superfluity, it necessarily connects with a future life for man. Religion and morality, though always in connection, are not synonymous. The future life as taught and believed in the Churches has been vague and based on hope, faith, and revelation. Revelation would settle the matter, if reliable, but the Bible has lost its hold on the modern mind as a revelation, and a future life in Churches has only been a hope, or a faith, and they have been the stimulating factors of religion. Now comes Modern Spiritualism with its little rap, proving an intelligence that is supermundane, that man consciously survives the death of his body. If hope and faith are the strong factors of religion, then, when knowledge can be added to them that when a man dies he shall live again, it is religion in the superlative degree, a religion surpassing all other forms of religion. The Rev. M. J. Savage, who is very hospitable to Spiritualism, closed a late sermon with these truthful words: "The one thing the world needs to-day is knowledge that death is not the end, for this alone can tell us what we are, and lift us to our birth-right as sons and daughters of God." Spiritualism if true in its basic claim does that, and those who know from experience that it is a truth know also that it is a religion before all others.

I do not object to the name of Church for an organisation of Spiritualists, but I think the spiritual gatherings will be in time in the Churches, so the name will legitimately come. I never like to hear the "visible supply," if



I may so call the body of labelled Spiritualists, bear hard on that venerable institution, which has had its bad as well as its good history. Its dogmatism, its bigotry, its persecutions, its superstitions have all been obstacles to progress, and yet it has progressed, and to-day the Church is a more rational institution than it ever was before, and is growing more so, and I think it due to the Spiritualism that is in the air. That many in the Church are benighted, pretend to believe what they really cannot in the nature of things believe to be true, I have no doubt; but every year such things are dropped more or less and more liberal ones taken on, and when comparing epochs we see the trend of the whole is in the direction of light, truth, and knowledge, and the rear-guard now is where the van was a century or two ago. Even Theodore Parker, the arch-heretic of thirty or forty years ago, is now a saint to those who persecuted him, and his ideas are quite in the rear of those of the more radical preachers of to-day. Just compare the funeral services to-day with those common fifty years ago. Then it was:—

"Each in his narrow cell *for ever* laid,  
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep."

In the same evangelical Church the minister lately said at the grave where the body was laid: "Look not there for your dear departed, they are with other invisibles in your own homes." Among the seekers of spiritual truth Church members come by thousands hungry for the consolation that the Church does not afford, and the pastors have to meet such a want and use our thunder for the supply, and make their sermons correspond with modern ideas, which are in the air, and the most popular preachers to-day are those who favour Spiritualism, not always calling it by its name, but their ideas are full of it, and one gets at many of the liberal Churches as good Spiritualism as from the spiritual speakers. No one who notes the signs of the times can fail to observe this tendency, and so many Spiritualists are inside of the Church that this liberal tendency manifest in the pulpits generally must be considered a part of this great modern spiritual movement.

I think a large part of Spiritualism is in the Church to-day and getting more and more so, and the pulpit more and more teaches it, and it will continue and increase and the Churches become practically spiritual in the modern sense and the better portion of Spiritualists be found there. One must remember the social element in the Churches is the important and sustaining element, and many Spiritualists see it and are wise enough to hold on to it. Respectability is a great factor in this life, and the Churches have almost the monopoly of it, and it is too valuable to be scattered and lost, and it will not be, for the Churches will yet adopt Spiritualism, and it will be only adding proof positive to their every-day assertions.

There is no danger of Christianity going out in smoke; it will change for the better, as it has changed; and I think the influence that has done it is the spirit world, which has always been our overruling providence long before 1848, though it seems to have been more practically manifest in these latter years. There are more Spiritualists in this city (Boston) than ever before. The meetings called spiritual are no longer as large as they were fifteen or twenty years ago, but don't for one moment suppose Spiritualism is growing less. There are ten times as many Spiritualists in the Churches to-day as there were then, and they are good Spiritualists and firm believers, interested in the phenomena. They do not feel like disconnecting themselves from the Churches; social matters are too attractive; and, besides, there is no necessity for such disconnection. They appreciate the Bible more for what Spiritualism has taught them than they did; its fables and its improbables are explained by Spiritualism into facts and probables. Church creeds, particularly orthodox, if they were as they were two hundred years ago would kill the Churches, but the change has saved, and will save them, and eventually the modern spiritual idea will be adopted and be the stone that the builders rejected, and which then will be the head of the corner. Astronomy is a science, but Young, the author of "Night Thoughts," said, "An undevout astronomer is mad," so there is a religious side to that science. I think an undevout Spiritualist is mad also; so while it is a science it is still more a religion, and what is unique in it is a scientific religion.

Boston, June 3rd, 1891.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

### Personal Experience.

SIR,—You may deem the following of interest to your readers:—When a few years back I was suddenly made conscious in my own person of the power of the spirit-world, the very natural desire came to have positive evidence that these new experiences were due to distinct individualities, and were not some fresh developments within myself. The desire was, to my mind, fully gratified in the following instances. I was present at a weekly meeting, held at the house of the local medium, Mrs. Barnes, whose controls on this occasion told us that, beside those present in the flesh, there was gathered a number of spirit people who had passed into spirit-life in a low state of development, and believing their miserable condition was final. To these the controlling spirit spoke, and told them of the possibilities of progress and happiness. It was very impressive, thus to listen to the "preaching to spirits in prison," and to feel how true it all was. And here came the wished-for evidence. My arm was shaken by outside influence and reached out to a Bible that lay on a table near me. I determined not to look, but let the "influence" have its way; in fact, I was intently listening to the address. The book was opened, and the leaves turned over, until my finger was firmly placed, and then I looked, and saw it was on these most appropriate words: not the chapter alone, but the verses: "How then shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" I was filled with astonishment, and at the same time felt deeply thankful for this response to my earnest wish. I called the attention of the friends to this remarkable display of spirit-power and intelligence by reading the words quoted, and as I finished, the power controlling me hastily closed the book (purposely, I now believe). On reaching home, I related the circumstance to my wife, and got a Bible to read the passage, but did not succeed in finding it, as I had not noticed what book it was in, but I thought it was in one of the short Epistles (to the Ephesians, or Galatians, or one of those), and it was some weeks afterwards that I accidentally (?) came across the passage in Rom. x. 14, 15.

On another occasion I had to call and speak to the late president of our society, Mr. Yates (who, by-the-bye, is a medical electrician), on some society matter, but I had only a few minutes to spare before my dinner hour expired. Whilst speaking, I felt an influence come over me, on the strangeness of which—the time considered—I remarked, but Mr. Yates said, "Mediums generally say they feel influence here; give way to it." I yielded to the power, which made me stoop like an old man, led me to a book case containing some 200 to 300 volumes, and reached a large work down on "Obstetrics," turned at once, and directed Mr. Yates' attention to the chapter on "prolonged labour." (We had just been speaking of my wife, who was expecting to be confined at any moment, and I had left her with some misgivings.) A second book was taken down, opened, and attention directed to a part also bearing on the condition my wife was in. Both books were quite strange to me, neither did I observe the titles until the power left me. Under the direction of the controlling power, Mr. Yates at once accompanied me home, when we found my wife suffering considerably, though nothing sudden or serious had apparently occurred. However, a few magnetic passes were found very soothing to the invalid, and eventually everything came right. Here are two instances which are solid ground for my belief in the teachings of Spiritualism, as to the reality of spirit-guidance. Perhaps some of your Theosophical readers will give me the explanation from their point of view; it will interest me, and possibly others, too.

Nottingham.  
June 8th, 1891.

J. W. BURRELL.

### Madame Blavatsky.

SIR,—May I ask Mr. George Davis for further particulars about the apparition of H.P.B.? Was she different in figure, or was she bulky as in lifetime? Did it occur to him to ask whether she now adhered to all her teaching in the "Secret Doctrine," Reincarnation, &c.? If so, what was her reply?

I. O.



## SOCIETY WORK.

**NATIONAL SPIRITUALISTS' FEDERATION.**—We are requested to announce that the annual conference will be held in the Prince's Theatre, Bradford, on Sunday, July 5th prox., John Lamont, Esq., in the chair, 10.30 a.m. and 2 p.m. A public meeting will be held at 6 p.m., which will be addressed by Mrs. E. Hardinge Britten, Mr. E. W. Wallis, Mr. J. J. Morse, and others. Admission one shilling to reserved seats.

**PADDINGTON.**—The lecture on "Spiritualism" by Mr. W. O. Drake was given last Sunday evening at the Radical Club, and good discussion and questions resulted. The hall was well filled, and to thinking minds opposition was dealt with in a lucid and comprehensive style. A quantity of literature was distributed. We thank friends for their attendance.—PERCY SMYTH, 34, Cornwall-road, W.

**24, HARCOURT-STREET, MARYLEBONE.**—Mr. W. Jeffery delivered an interesting address on Sunday, urging that vegetarianism has been a means of spiritual development. Next Sunday at 11 a.m., Mr. T. Pursey, "Spirit Teachings"; at 7 p.m., the Rev. Dr. F. R. Young, "The Uses and Dangers of Spiritualism." Thursday, at 7.45 p.m., Mrs. Hawkins. Saturday, at 7.45 p.m., Mrs. Spring.—C. WHITE.

**23, DEVONSHIRE-ROAD, FOREST HILL, S.E.**—Our rooms were filled on Sunday by a very attentive audience. The chairman opened the meeting with an invocation and a short reading, after which Mrs. Bliss's controls gave an excellent address as to our future state, urging us to lives of purity. Several clairvoyant descriptions were given. Next Sunday, Mr. Veitch, at 7 p.m. Thursday, séance; at 8 p.m., Mrs. Bliss. Saturday, at 8 p.m., developing circle.—H. W. BRUNKER, Sec.

**PECKHAM RYE.**—At the open air meeting on Sunday the subject of Mr. Lees' lecture was "The Doctrine of the Fall," in the light of the elimination of the devil, comparing the different accounts of the fall given in Genesis and the New Testament. The discussion following the lecture ranged around the reliability of a literal acceptance of the Bible, and the character which such an acceptance gave to God. Subject for next Sunday, at 3.15 p.m., "Evil and Sin; what are they?"—J. H.

**OPEN-AIR SPIRITUAL MISSION, HYDE PARK (NEAR MARBLE ARCH).**—Last Sunday at our usual stand near Marble Arch a large meeting was held and addressed by Messrs. Percy Smyth and E. Bullock. There were a good many listeners, and a good discussion resulted. A large number of copies of "LIGHT" and other tracts were freely distributed and eagerly sought after. Afterwards Messrs. Drake and Veitch gave some good speeches; and the day was well spent. Next Sunday, at 3.30 p.m., with our blue banner.—PERCY SMYTH.

**NEWCASTLE.**—Our out-door meeting at Quay Side was a great success, and hundreds were listening to our friends Stevenson, Rostron, and Henderson. The opposition by the audience is a most important item in this mode of propagandism when they are well answered as by our friends. On Sunday next our hall will be closed for the purpose of a field day on the Town Moor. We expect thousands there, and hope this year to score even better success than last. Speakers from outlying districts are expected. Services at 11 a.m. and 2 and 6 p.m. Refreshments in a booth, at moderate rates.—B. HARRIS.

**PECKHAM SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, WINCHESTER HALL, 33, HIGH-STREET, PECKHAM.**—On Sunday morning Mr. Munns recounted some remarkable experiences of spirit power, which he had witnessed, and a good discussion followed. In the evening Mr. Lees kindly took the platform and his guides emphatically declared the necessity for plain speaking and bold action. God's spiritual gifts to man had been almost crushed, and we must, if we would win the battle and progress, give utterance to the words of the spirit truthfully, without fear or favour, in fact, be thorough and not ashamed to own our conviction. Sunday next, Mr. R. J. Lees, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. Friday, 8 p.m., healing.—J. T. A.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL HALL, CARDIFF.**—On Sunday morning to the members of the adult class, after an excellent reading by Mrs. E. G. Sadler, one of the controls of Mrs. E. Adams gave an excellent discourse upon the text "If I have told you of earthly things and ye do not believe, how shall ye believe if I tell you of Heavenly?" in which we were exhorted while seeing and seeking for phenomenal evidences of spirit life, which appeal primarily to our physical senses, not to let our spiritual vision become thereby obscured to the higher and grander possibilities and verities of the inner life. In the evening, in the prolonged absence of our president, the address was given by Mr. E. Adams, whose remarks had special reference to the anniversary celebrations which were then brought to a close.—E. A.

**LEWISHAM (TOP OF GEORGE-LANE, HITHERGREEN-LANE).**—On Sunday last an open air meeting was held at the above place, a number of members from the Forest Hill Society going over to assist Mrs. Gunn, of Hithergreen-lane, who has decided to carry on this outdoor work. This lady is a most zealous worker, holding a public séance at her residence, 193, Hithergreen-lane every Friday evening, and doing all this work for our cause entirely at her own expense. At the outdoor meeting stirring addresses were delivered by Messrs. A. M. Rodger

and Emms. We had a most attentive audience of between fifty and sixty persons, and Mrs. Gunn distributed appropriate literature to all present. We hold a meeting next Sunday at the same place at 3.30 p.m., when Messrs. A. M. Rodger, Veitch, and Brunker are expected to speak.—H. W. BRUNKER, Sec.

**SOUTH LONDON SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, 311, CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD, S.E. (NEAR THE "GREEN").**—Mr. A. L. Ward's address on "Healing Mesmerism, and the Law," was well received on Sunday evening last, and it is hoped we shall have a large attendance at the Conference in the Athenæum Hall on July 2nd. We had an excellent attendance at our week evening service on Thursday last, the subject under consideration being "The Spirit Circle." These gatherings are held every week, on Thursdays at 8.30 p.m., when questions and discussion are invited. Friends and opponents are alike welcome. The healing meetings are held on the same evenings at 8 p.m. The half-yearly general meeting will be held on Sunday, June 28th, after the evening service, for the election of officers, &c. The summer outing to Knockholt will be held on Monday, July 13th.—W. E. LONG, Hon. Sec.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**M.P.**—Illness has delayed the notices of which you write. Both books are under review. The first part of the notice of one appears in this number.

**"REJECTED."**—We have no "conspiracy of silence," but we confess to inability to understand what you send. If you think fit to communicate privately we will pay all attention to what you wish to say. We have no desire to burke truth, as we have none to circulate that which is not true. You must be more explicit.

**P. C. H.**—Thanks, but here we are naturally little interested in such matters, the importance of which, however, we by no means underrate. We always keep an eye on them, but do not feel called to give space, already inconveniently crowded, to them. We file your letter for future reference.

**R. L. B. (San Francisco).**—We are greatly obliged by your kind inquiries and good wishes, and especially for your appreciative words as to "LIGHT." We try to make it good and to exclude questionable matter. Our space is small and we can use it only for what is of permanent value. We wish we could give a better account of our health. It is very poor. Any experiences welcome.

## THE "REVIEW OF REVIEWS" FREE.

Mr. Stead offers the "Review of Reviews" free for the next six months to "those who are serving the English-speaking race in circumstances which make it practically impossible for them to become subscribers," namely, to

1. Missionaries of all denominations, Catholic or Protestant, in active service in the mission field.
2. The officers and crews of her Majesty's navy in commission, at the rate of three copies for each ship, or one copy per 100 of the ship's company.
3. The reading-rooms of the barracks or camps of the British army, at home or abroad, in the same proportion.
4. The officers and crews of the passenger steamers which form the ocean ferry between the various divisions of the English-speaking world, six copies per steamer.
5. The reading-rooms of all police barracks, one copy per station.
6. The keepers of lighthouses or lightships whose lonely vigil is indispensable to the safety of the ocean highway.

**LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE,**  
2, DUKE STREET, ADELPHI, W.C.

## A CONVERSAZIONE

WILL BE HELD IN THE

**BANQUETING HALL, ST. JAMES'S HALL**  
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ON

**THURSDAY NEXT, JUNE 25th, at 7 p.m.**

**AN ADDRESS WILL BE DELIVERED BY**  
**REV. J. PAGE HOPPS.**

**SUBJECT: "A STUDY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT JEHOVAH**  
**BY SPIRIT-LIGHT."**

**MUSIC AND REFRESHMENTS DURING THE EVENING.**

Tickets of Admission may be had on application (with stamped addressed envelope) to Mr. B. D. GODFREY, 2, DUKE-STREET, ADELPHI, W.C.